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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE IMMORTALITY OF GOOD WORK.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”—REV. xiv. 13.

This is a benediction: it is a benediction, too, falling where we are accustomed to look for anything else but felicitation. *Waste, decay, death*, are words which usually bring only the most gloomy associations; but in the New Testament, more and more as it goes on toward its consummation, the brightest words, the strongest tokens of joy and of triumph, overhang these desolate places; and where men have been accustomed to set Fear as a sentinel, to wet the place with tears, there, in Christianity, we see banners set up for victory; and we see all cheer and all comfort predicated of that which has been the world's dread and the world's curse.

This is a kind of parallel to the passage which I read in the opening service—namely, the Beatitudes, the benedictions that Christ pronounced; for when he taught his disciples the blessings of poverty and meekness, of persecution and trouble, he falsified all the prejudices, and ran counter to almost all the sympathies and antipathies, of mankind. But the New Testament teachers are always working in two worlds—the visible and the invisible; and their standpoint is always in the great invisible spirit world. Their thought rests upon the ripe man, the consummated character, the life that is without death. And so, while they are perpetually

recognizing things that are present to the senses, they are forever judging of them, of their courses, of their issues or results, by standards that lie above and beyond the senses; and that which is contradictory when it is only construed by the laws of time and the world will have a new meaning and a new relation when it is construed according to the higher tests and facts of the spiritual and eternal world.

It is declared that those who die in the Lord, in the spirit of Christ and in the hope of Christ, rest from their labors. And yet, activity is very pleasant. There is much that irradiates life in enterprise, in planning, in energetic execution; and when one is in health and strength, even endurance becomes a manly pleasure, and men look back upon the things which they have suffered, frequently, with a conscious gratulation. But in all work, in this world, there is the friction, there are the perplexities, there are the emery particles of care, there is the imperfect result, there is the mistake, there is the sin, there are a thousand hindrances. We are working with men who are imperfectly sanctified, and we are ourselves their unsanctified companions. We are in every way working in such a manner that the braver and more aspiring a man is, the more does he feel the checks, the hindrances, and the imperfections of his labor.

Now, "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;" for they rest from that part of their labor which is time-worn, and which is imperfect from want of knowledge, or from stress of temptation or of passion.

It would be blessed if men could work all their lives long toward right ends, in harmonious relations, having nothing but the natural outplay of spirit which requires sleep and waking again. That which makes life burdensome in its labors is not *labor*, in one particular acceptation of the term. The incidental elements of labor, its imperfections, are what make life burdensome. Often, what a man does not do is heavier than what he does do. Often, the things which are but incidental to us are much more influential upon our spirits than the main things on which our life is spent. And we shall rest from all this part of life in dying, or in the great transition. It is blessed to live; but it will be yet

more blessed, having lived well, to die—and for this reason : that *our works follow us*.

We regard it as strange when energetic and useful men are cut off. Men cling to their work by that very force which enables them to be useful. We could not be what we are appointed to be in this life if we were so indifferent to our tasks and responsibilities that we could let go easily; and this very tenacity, this very life-adhesion, becomes at last a hindrance. So long as we are bound to this life, we are bound to be interested in the things of this life; and men cling to their work as if that were nature, when it is nature *in transitu*, or when it is nature partial, or relative to one particular period of our age; and when persons are taken out of life in the midst of strength and function, men marvel. They cannot understand why those who are useful should be removed. They look upon such as have gone in the prime of life, in mid-age, or young in years, with a kind of strangeness; and they wonder and talk of a mysterious providence, and ask, "What will become of their work? Who shall stand up in that household? What captain shall lead that band?"

But do you forget that dying makes but very little void in this world? Indeed, after Christ died he lived more efficaciously than when he was alive. The death of the apostle stopped nothing, but sped much. No age was ever left without men. We are poor in our conception, but God is rich. He that could raise up seed to Abraham from the very stones need not look about much, nor mourn that men, one and another, drop out from the functions of life; yet it is natural that we should think so. They who have the responsibility, they who supervise the labor, they who must replace the men that are gone, think it strange that those who are well-equipped, and of the right spirit, should be taken out of life.

But the consideration of triumph is that men do not cease their work. They never die. The irksome part of their labor they rest from; but their works go after, go on with, or have gone before them. A man's life is not simply what you see. The effects of a man's life are not simply those

things which you can count, measure, or describe. He who lives in earnest, striving to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, or in the spirit of Christ, throws into life elements which never die out even here—elements that are not witnesses; that have no report; that come not with observation; that are immeasurable; but that are more real, a thousand times, than the things which are visible.

A man may build his mansion; he may be able and willing to expend uncounted sums in rearing up its walls of marble, and in storing it with every element of beauty within; and yet, dying, he may have done but very little; while over the way was a man who never built a house, except the airy house of character. The invisible precious-stones that are laid in the walls of the New Jerusalem he laid around about his own character. He left little save influence; but that influence, day by day exerted, fell into sensitive souls, and shaped this disposition, moulded that one, directed the course of life in another one, and revealed the truth to still another one.

A good man's heart is a seed-sower; and his disposition, not according to his own intent and purpose, but simply according to that nature which God has given to goodness in men—the power of goodness—is perpetually throwing itself out, and out, and out.

The air, as botanists now know, is full of invisible seeds. Fungous plants—those minute mildews which settle on vegetation—are as well organized as if they were dahlias or tulips. They are small, almost inconspicuous, frequently mischievous, in one sense—the economic; nevertheless, they are beautiful and perfect organizations; and how fruitful they are! We cannot even see the spores in which they carry their seeds; but they are filling the air with myriads and myriads and myriads of invisible germs.

And that which is true of the vegetable kingdom in its lower form is true also of men's souls, that are carrying seeds innumerable, of thoughts, suggestions, and feelings and qualities, which fill the air; and because we cannot see them, nor tell where they rise, nor trace their effects back to their causes, men ignore them, or are unconscious of them; but

the simple *being good* is itself a power to which there is no physical or revelatory power that can be compared. Unconscious quality is far more influential than voluntary inventions and organizations.

What is it that children remember in the parent—in the devoted mother? To be sure they remember the twilight hour of inspiration; to be sure they remember the reading of the book; to be sure they remember the restraints of the Sabbath day; to be sure they remember the special care and the great kindness: nevertheless, the main thing which hovers in our memory of our parents is their mind-quality,—not that which specifies and analyses truth in this and that realm of knowledge, but that which hangs in our memory as clouds in the sky. The air seems to be filled with their patience, and gentleness, and goodness, and self-sacrifice for others. It is not by single actions that they impressed us so much as by the diffused influence of their inward life and nature. This rests in the memory as nothing else does.

And that which we recognize as true of the parent in the family is true of men everywhere. The humblest man, the man who is poked away in the corner of a shop, and who does not see twenty men in a week, but who is all the time producing on those whom he does see the impression of fidelity and patience and gentleness, is not a public instructor, but is a public actor; and he is not to be limited in the power of his life to the things which his hands are doing, nor even to the things which he wills to do, but to the unconscious power that streams out from fidelity, and patience, and gentleness in him. The unconscious influence of those qualities in him transcends in volume almost all the force of these physical things.

Your patience in your conditions of life, your yearnings and longings after something better, your very deficiencies, in the way that you treat them, are so many powers in you; and they do not stop when you stop. They sow themselves. As the vegetable kingdom perpetuates itself, by this summer ripening seeds for the next summer, so men have a kind of transfused existence in the generation that follows them; and we live in our children, and in their children, and in their

children. We live in our neighbors, and in their neighbors, and in their neighbors.

As when you throw pebbles into water, the lines which they make go on widening, and following each other in endless succession, so in life the circles of things are diffused and widened; and though you die, your works follow on, and keep working. Your nature is not gone: it is transplanted into others.

When the first Rhode Island Greening was found to be so rare and beautiful an apple, men took grafts from the tree, and now there are Rhode Island Greenings in almost every well-ordered orchard on the continent; and they all came from this original tree, little slips being taken from it and grafted into one tree of another kind, and another, and another, until this variety, after many generations, has become one of the most widespread that is known in this land. And who can tell what baskets and bins of luscious apples shall be gathered in the years and years which are to come as the fruit of that one seedling tree?

One noble man, one noble woman, one person who has the quality of fruit, may graft it, by unconscious influence, upon some other person, and that other person upon others, and so on. Thus your courage may be reverberating for years, and your aspiration may be gleaming and glancing again in endless continued reflections, after you are gone. Blessed are the dead who die in Christ (if they have lived in Christ before they died), for their works follow them.

This quality of unconsciousness has often very affecting instances in it. When the then reigning king of Germany was overthrown by Napoleon, and his kingdom was trodden under foot by that behemoth, and the people were almost exterminated, his queen Louisa so bore the sorrows of her people that her own life broke down under it; and she rested. And the great Rauch carved her in marble; and in the environs of Berlin you may pass through a twilight grove, and enter a little sequestered temple, and through an ante-chamber with windows of glass that sheds down a blue light and gives an unworldly atmosphere, you shall pass into a recess where pure light comes through an unstained window, and where

you seem almost to have entered the other life ; and there lying is the monument of marble in which she is represented as at last having found rest. There is such an indescribable sweetness in her face, there is such a triumph of peace on it, that no man who ever looked upon it could have done it, I think, without wet eyes ; and no man that ever saw it will forget it.

I brought home an engraving which has happily transferred the spirit of the original to paper, and have it hanging in my study ; and through troubles and sorrows that dead queen's marble has sent out such cheer and such sweetness of peace that I can scarcely think of her or hear her name without reverence and adoration. She never spoke a word nor sent a message ; she did not even make her own statue ; but the sculptor cut it from her life and gave to it the expression of peace ; and that peace, through night and darkness, through storms and battles, through revolutions and wars, has come down to us ; and I am a witness, for one, as hundreds of others might be also, that it has been a strength to my life, and the joy of many a turbid hour.

Now, that which marble can do, how much more can the living soul or the living face do ? The peace of God that passeth all understanding does not alone come to us directly from the bosom of God : it comes to us by reflection from many a venerable father's face ; from the face of many a mother, serene, just, and all-loving ; from the face of many a faithful friend. They who live sequestered, and do nothing but shine, may think themselves useless ; but, dying, they sow more seeds than twenty generations can reap—and not the less because those seeds are invisible.

But, also, the formative work, aside from the unconscious—that which we plan, purpose, and execute—remains, or may remain after we are gone. All that which men put forth in the work of education, the repression that parents exercise, the self-denial which they teach their children, the ideas and habits which they graft into them, the whole sphere of the household work, deliberate and intentional—this abides. The father and the mother die ; but the group of children go forth ; and the first instinct of those

who are grown up, and have themselves become parents, is to reproduce upon their children that which they remember gratefully of their own parents' discipline. And so, wise parents transmit their habits of training by their children down through many generations. They may be forgotten in the succession, but their work is going on. And we are ourselves what we are by reason of those who were our ancestors in Europe or on this continent. Many and many a sturdy old Puritan father or mother is forgotten, from whose loins we sprung; and we are, to-day, what we are, in that which is good and noble, through their influence.

We cannot tell what our children inherit from us. Something of bad, doubtless, and much of good, doubtless; but how much we are doing we shall not know until we see it in the other life. Our direct influence upon souls around about us is of a kind which we cannot measure now. We often think that those who respond to our suggestions, and are visibly modified by us, show efficient work; but many and many a tough nature does not respond easily, and yet the work is none the less real. The seed does not always come up when you sow it. Some seed does not grow the same season that it is planted. Some seed needs to be cracked by the winter's cold and frost. Some seeds lie in the ground two or more years before they come up. Seeds may be buried a thousand years, and then come up. There are many natures that do not take on influence easily. It lies in them until, by and by, storms or troubles bring it forth.

There are now before me, I do not doubt, multitudes of men and women who can testify that God has blessed to them the labor of some parent, some pastor, some class-leader, some obscure and humble friend, working by their side, on the farm, or in the shop, long after the benefactor had gone. You can look back and say, "I see the tendencies that he planted in me, and that now have brought forth fruit in me to the honor of God, and to my soul's regeneration. I can see that this work was begun by him in such and such a manner; and he died and knew not what he had done; but I am to-day what I am, in part, through the blessing of God, by that person's fidelity." I can trace not a

few in the long past who left their impression upon me. They never knew it until they rose to heaven. It may be given to us there to see what we have really been about in life. Somewhere, at some time, all good work will avail. It is not lost.

This after-work is signally manifest in those who have founded and conducted institutions, which are artificial persons, as it were, raised up to perpetuate certain influences or certain functions. Schools, academies, universities—these are organizations of beneficence; and one man may, by wise method, arrangement and benefaction, mix himself in such a way with all the noblest of generations which are yet to come, that his heart-beat will be felt in the world for a thousand years.

When the early fathers got together in their poverty to found Yale and Harvard and Princeton, do you think they knew what a band of men—what lawyers, what judges, what ministers, what civilians of every kind, what noble citizens and patriots—they were standing, if not fathers, yet godfathers to? And all that comes from these fountains which they opened is part and parcel of their life. So they are not dead.

There was a time when Wolsey controlled the great kingdom of Great Britain, and substantially managed the king and his courtiers; and his influence was felt far and wide; and in the height of his power, almost as a recreation, he founded Cardinal College, after his fall named Christ College, in Oxford; and now all his control of England during the time that he lived is as a grain of mustard seed compared with the work that has been and is done by this single institution, which is a fountain from which has flowed his munificence for hundreds and hundreds of years in the past, and from which it will flow for hundreds and hundreds of years in the future. And we are ourselves beneficiaries of this historic man, who abused himself and who has been much abused. As the winds, no matter where they come from, wave every tree and leaf on their passage, so, no matter where knowledge springs from, it goes bearing benefaction to every living soul to whom it comes; and the noble fruits of noble natures that spring from this great work of

Wolsey are yet in the world. We are ourselves a part of the great band of those who have been blessed by him.

Peter Cooper will soon die, but his Cooper Union is immortal; for when its foundations crumble, or are toppled down by war or by the earthquake, there will be influences that it has sent forth into the world which cannot be separated from the world's history.

They who build libraries, such as the Lenox Library or the Astor Library of New York, are among the most beneficent of citizens. No other labor of their hands is to be compared with that by which they have established these great fountains of knowledge which are free to all.

He who opens in a village a free reading-room, and gives it to his fellow-citizens, has made himself immortal, because he has become one of the men who have set on foot influences which shall go on working for hundreds and hundreds of years after he is dead. His work follows him.

He who establishes a church that goes down through generations opens a fountain that shall bring daylight to thousands of men; and he himself will never be lost out of the world.

He who builds a hospital for the sick, he who makes a refuge for the incurable, for the poor, or for those who have no home, where they may bring forth their children, dying or living; he who, seeing misery, provides a remedy for it—he becomes a benefactor and a philanthropist; and his work, being established, will go on from generation to generation.

He who establishes a savings bank, and teaches the gospel of economy to thrice ten thousand poor; or he who establishes an insurance company, and teaches men to insure their lives or their property, and leads them to form habits of foresight, is working beneficently upon his race.

There is nothing so humble but that it has its effect upon men. There is nothing that makes men more careful, more frugal, more prudent, more sympathetic, more co-operative, more courageous, or more enterprising, than these things; and there are none of them, no matter how humble, and no matter how little regard is paid to them, that are not admirable. And men, working wherever they may be, even for the

secular and domestic welfare of their fellows, or for their intellectual enfranchisement, are working in ways that will be felt far down in the future.

But still more are they working thus who are working for men's moral development.

The body dies, but the invisible influence does not die. Nothing can destroy those qualities which belong to the soul; they are forever fresh, and they in whom they dwell partake beforehand of something of the vigor of their own after-immortality.

Those who give to the world thoughts which enrich and cheer and comfort men never cease to work. What they do is not to be seen in their own generation, but it will be seen in the generations that follow. Architects who build cathedrals and temples and palaces which inspire veneration or worship are men who in their own way embody thoughts which impress themselves upon the world long after they are gone.

There were various architects who at different periods built the cathedral at Winchester, which, though it may not be the most stately and the most magnificent cathedral in the world, is the one from which I extracted more comfort than from any other that I ever saw. Beginning with the earliest Saxon period, it represents every step of architecture in England down to the present day; and every one of the architects who were employed in the erection of that cathedral sleeps under its roof. There lie the old English kings—for that was the capital of England in the Saxon days of old. There are bodies of numerous martyrs. I walked up and down between those gleaming walls of Caen stone, almost white, and it seemed to me as though the historic roof shed luminousness down on me; and I was impressed, more than by anything else, by the fact that those unknown and almost-forgotten men who reared that building to God, there rested; and thousands of sensitive natures who wander there, like me a pilgrim from afar, will be affected by what they have done. They did their work, and they did not know what a comfort it would be to those who lived after them—men not yet born, and from a continent that was not yet discovered.

Artists who are worthy of their name, and who give to the affection, the thought, and the higher life of the soul expositions of truth on canvas, are silent teachers; and from age to age who shall measure their influence?

So it is with singers—with poets. Is Shakspeare dead? Is Milton dead? Is Wordsworth dead? Is Watts dead? Is Wesley dead? Is Dante, or Goethe, or Homer, or Virgil dead? They were never on earth as much alive as they are now, going up and down, to and fro, through the times and ages, still chanting their joyful strains, and imparting instruction. The world was never so full of them as it has been since they ceased from their external work. They rest from their toil, and their works do follow them.

The same is true of teachers of every name and in every place. Of course teachers that are in honor and affluence (if there be any such) are content with their work; but all who are teaching in the far-away colored schools of the South; all who are teaching in the log-cabin schools on the pioneer lines of our new States and districts; obscure, feeble women, who are not apt for housework, or are not able to endure its fatigues, pining, with a tendency to consumption, but nevertheless teaching in summer schools, with hardly strength enough to bear the burden and heat of each single day; all who are teaching in Sunday-schools and mission schools; all teachers who are working directly on the conscience, the understanding, and the affections of the young—do they die?

There came to Litchfield, when I was about eight years old, a tall and slender creature. Her name I have forgotten, if I ever knew it. So delicate and attenuated was she that the sun seemed to shine through her. She moved so quietly about the school-room, that it was as if a bird were flying in the midst of a tree from branch to branch. Whereas, before, in that hateful old stinking school-house, I had been cabined, and cribbed, and curbed, and pinched, and whipped for not learning what was not taught me; there came this spectre of a human being, whose eyes were lustrous of another world, and whose heart was full of gentleness and richness. Nor can I remember that she ever opened a book to me. I can only remember her as a dream; but I feel to this hour, and

distinctly, that many of the things which I say to you were born in me out of the influence of that woman, who, if I mistake not, taught in that school but a single summer. I have long been preaching, and it may be said that many preachers who have gone forth from this church have derived influences from me; and they, in their preaching, are unconsciously and unknowingly indebted to her. She lives in a strength that never dies, born again in each generation of men who carry forward the influences that she brought to bear upon my heart.

These are illustrations that might be indefinitely multiplied, and from every side of human life your observation and experience will increase the list endlessly.

Not only do our works follow us on earth, but I believe that they follow us into the other life. What we do here so acts upon us that it determines largely what we shall do there. We are throwing ourselves forward continually; and not only are we acting thus in the formation of dispositions and characters in ourselves which are to last in the other life, but we are acting upon others, and sending them forward. Multitudes go from among us before we die. They pass on in advance of us—children, scholars, friends, neighbors, parishioners. We are like men that are upon a wrecked ship. The ship is driven upon the shore; lines are extended; we stay on the wreck until the last soul is landed, helping one and another and another; and then, at last, when every living creature, including the very dog itself, is off and safe, we follow and reach the land, where we are welcomed by all that we have helped, who are rejoicing with thanksgiving for what we did in their behalf, and are gathering about us, even though they be tattered and torn and in their night vestments, as their benefactor and saviour.

How much more, when we go up from this shipwrecked world to that shore where there is no poverty and no weakness, but everlasting joy upon the head of every one—how much more shall we then be met and greeted by those whom we have rescued and sent forward! It is better to have saved one soul than to have built a kingdom.

It is from such considerations as these, in the first place,

that I would encourage persons who are under circumstances of discouragement, whose ambition is not met, whose ideality is not satisfied, and who seem to themselves to be working in a small sphere. It is not for you to determine your sphere, or what fidelity may do in a humble place. The greatest victories of the world are those which are snatched out of the most desperate emergencies.

If Napoleon, with a hundred thousand men, had routed an army of ten thousand, it would not have been evidence of valor; but when, with twenty thousand men, he met and routed Austria's hundred thousand, the disparity of the numbers and the desperation of the case made his fame and his glory.

So in this world, not the things which are easy, not the things which come fastest and most naturally, are always the best or the most praiseworthy. That which we do because it is duty, that which we do because of faith in an all-seeing Saviour, that which we do in small places and under obscure circumstances—that, heaven knows, and God knows, is the thing that by and by will prove to be the gold, and not the dross, as sometimes it does here.

If you have no gift of speech, no matter. Have you the gift of rearing your children to honesty, to fidelity, to industry? Go on. There is eternity in your work. Do not look wistfully out from your place. If you are not called to go forth into any larger sphere, be content where you are, and say, "It is not given me to be what some others are."

A smith in a Spanish province draws a piece of steel out of his small store, and works by day and by night in his little stithy, and forges a bright blade, and makes it such that it can neither be dented nor broken; and it is sent out of his sight; and it goes from one hand to another, convoyed by Jews and peddlers; and at last it falls into a patriot's hands; and, wielded by him, it rescues a nation. It flashes above the battle; it leads devoted men; and when they return in triumph and peace, and this patriot sheathes his sword, it is the sword which that poor obscure smith made. He has wrought a great work, but he knows it not.

Every mother is a smith. Her child is a blade for vic-

tory, if it is well forged, well taught. You may not know what its after history will be, but God knows. He takes care of that.

Men say, "You tell us that it is more blessed to die than to live; you quote to us the text, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: they shall rest from their labors*; but do you say that it is blessed for me to die in the midst of my household?" No, not in any such sense as that you should seek it; but God brings it to you. O thou of a faithful heart; O thou that hast given to husband and child all that soul can give; O thou that hast the witness in thyself that all the aims of thy life are for others—for thee it is blessed. Do you say, "What will become of them if God takes me?" Look up, and let the light of hope shine in thy face; for if it be God that calls thee, be sure that it is God who will take care of those who are dear to you. He who enables you to take care of them can give to them the power which he has given to you.

"My companions—what shall become of them?" They are not separated from you. We are never so near to those whom we love as when they have dropped the body, and have come again by the spirit. Do you not believe in the communion of the saints? Do you not believe that those who are faithful here in the midst of tears and sorrows and groans and labors, and have wrought out in themselves the likeness of God, will be rewarded in the life to come? Do you believe that the ineffable qualities of fidelity, of love, of truth, of simplicity and of nobleness are less because the body is stripped away from them, and because they cannot be discerned by the senses? Are they annihilated or swept away or gone from us? Believe it who will; not I, who believe in the communion of the saints, and in the divine influences that are sent to us from the battlements of heaven, by those who continually cry, "Come, come, come," to the loved ones that they have left behind. God will take care of them. But if, looking forward through the scenes that are opening before you, you tremble with fear lest suffering shall come to one, or another, or another, O thou of little faith, be not afraid to die! Be not unwilling to live, either. Stand

in thy place, and believe that, living or dying, God, who loves thee better than thou dost love thyself, will do exceeding abundantly more for you than you can ask or think. If it be God's will that you should go, and if he calls you to go, then it is better that you should go; and blessed are you if you can go willingly and joyfully.

“But shall I, when the call comes to me, go thus? It is a sweet and triumphant thought; but shall I, of human desires, when death shall come, be blessed—I that tremble, and have so poor a hope, and a worse life—shall I be prepared when I am called to go hence?” God, who sows, shall also ripen. He that has begun in you a work of grace will finish that work. He that is preparing you for your experiences now will see that you are prepared, by-and-by, for the emergencies of sorrow, and for the exit of death. Do not try yourself, nor test your preparation for dying, by the way you feel to-day. No man can imagine, in the hour of strength and vigor, how he will feel in the hour of death.

There hangs the green pippin, which all the winds cannot now shake off from the boughs. “This is my mother-tree,” it says, “and here will I remain, sucking juices and growing large and sweet from day to day.” But something whispers to it, and says, “The time is coming when thou shalt be plucked from that bough, and gathered into some garner.” And it says to itself, “How can I ever endure being plucked off?” In its sour juices it tries to think how it will feel when its juices are sweet. In early summer, clinging to the parent tree with all its thongs so tenaciously that no shaking of the stem will bring it down, it tries to think what it will do in the mild autumn days when apples drop without the movement of a breath, because they are ripe.

Thou that art green, and art tied to life by many thongs; thou whose duty it is yet to stand in thy place, try not to think how thou wilt feel when it is thy duty to leave thy place and go forth. That God who takes care of us to-day will take care of us in the years that are to come. He who prepares you to live will prepare you to die. It will be easier for you to die than to live, when it is your duty to die. Looking forward, be not sorry because, beholding your brood

of dear little children, you feel that you could not willingly leave them if God should call you to depart. He never will call you until he has prepared you to depart. As thy day is, so shall thy strength be also.

Work, then, in courage ; work in faith ; work in hope ; and work under all discouragements with contentment, knowing that you are doing more than you can see or measure ; knowing that you are sowing seeds in the air, and that God's winds are wafting them hither and thither, and that they are springing up you know not where ; knowing that you are serving a bountiful Master ; knowing that though you are doing but little to the sight you are doing much to the faith, and much to the invisible thought ; knowing that your life will go on in others, as others' lives have gone on in you, and that when the time shall come for you to depart, angels will come for you, and it shall be whispered above you by angelic voices, among which shall be the voices of those whom you have known and loved, "Blessed are the dying: come up hither." And as the vision of angels departs from our imagination, methinks I hear afar off, and growing less and less as they are farther and farther removed, till they sweep into the celestial city, the joyous shout, "Blessed are the dead ; they rest from care and sorrow, and their work goes on and follows them."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE have no need to come to thee to quicken thy thought, or to inspire thee to remembrance, O our Father; for thine unslumbering watchfulness, and thine ever-living love are forever in advance of us. We know not what to pray for as we ought. We know not what are the best things for us. We know not the proportions of thine administration. We know not the way, though thou art the way. Thy providence is full of beautifulness, of light, of darkness, and of uncertainty to us. Naked and open are all things before thee with whom we have to do; but with us things are partial, and obscure, and uncertain; and we know not what is best, though thou knowest altogether. And we do not beseech thee that we may instruct thee, or remind thee, or persuade thee: we beseech thee for the things which we shall receive, asking or not asking, because thou hast made it blessed to ask; because the gifts that come through our solicitation are doubly blessed; because thou dost join thyself to our wants; and our wants are never so royally supplied as when they are supplied by thy hand, consciously made known to us.

And now, we beseech of thee, O thou best of all, thou most thoughtful and careful of all, that thou wouldst grant to us to-day thine own self, brought very near to our consciousness, that our thoughts may rest in thee; that our hearts may be refreshed in thee; that we may rise up from that which is low in us, from the flesh in all its ways, its duties, its burdens, its besetments; and that we may have this day a spiritual life, and dwell in the Lord's Spirit; that we may rejoice in the visions of the blessed, in things invisible; that we may forsake the enchantments of this lower life, its sorceries, and all its evil; and that we may, at last, in purity of thought and of anticipation, take something of victory before it is achieved, knowing who is the Captain of our salvation, and that he who has been the Author shall be the Finisher of our faith. May we beforehand rejoice in victories, and in a consummation which doth so bring to us thoughts of thy mercy and of thy wonderful way of dealing with us in life.

We beseech of thee, if there be those in thy presence who are sad by reason of the things of this world, that they may this day be cheered by the presence of their God. If there be those who are burdened, and know not how to carry the load which is put upon them, graciously may they be sustained by thee. May they lean upon God, and find that his promises are sure. If there be those who are sad at heart, and who look upon the world as vain, and who look upon the things of the world as dropping from beneath them, and as passing beyond their reach, may they rejoice in the thought that as this world goes, the higher, the better, the true world of the soul comes. May they have faith to look and discern it, not as afar off, but as near at hand—perhaps nearer than they believe.

Grant, we pray thee, to all those who are tried by sickness, by care, by bereavements, by sorrows of any kind, courage and patience, and

a disposition to improve the dealings of God with them for their spiritual and everlasting good.

We pray that thou wilt be with the young, and grant that they may grow up in a true courage, willing to know and to do the things which are right, and to withstand whatsoever is unmanly and wrong. May they grow to a stature of virtue and piety such as we have not ourselves reached.

Grant, we pray thee, that all those who are taught in our schools, and all those who are instructed in our various households, may come up in remembrance before thee. May the blessing of Almighty God rest upon them abundantly.

We pray for those who are laboring in word or in deed in our midst. If thou hast inspired them to charity and to largeness of sympathy with men, we pray that thou wilt clothe them also with the power of truth, and with that wisdom which is from on high, that they may go forth to their several spheres of labor and work in faith, rejoicing to see the fruit of their labor; and may they work even if they see it not.

We pray that thou wilt grant a blessing to rest upon those in the midst of life who are enduring cares and feeling the winds of temptation's piercing currents; and may they be sustained in rectitude. May they maintain a Christian manhood, and be able to overturn their adversaries, and put aside the snares that environ them.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to the aged, whose years on earth are taking hold of the eternal years; and may every infirmity which speaks to them of age speak to them of renewed youth; may they rejoice that the journey is almost past, and that the new Jerusalem is almost in sight.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all the churches, everywhere, that worship in thy name. Purify thy people. Give them more and more the Spirit of Christ. More and more give them sympathy with all that labor for the common cause of God among men. And we pray that thou wilt overrule all divisions and dissensions and temptations to bitterness which prevail. We pray that thou wilt lead thy church universal through all its besetments in such a way that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may not be disowned in his own house, and that gentleness and purity and meekness and divine love may vindicate the claims of thy people.

We pray for the nations of the earth. How many are yet unvisited by thy gospel! How many know not the truth of God! How many are ignorant of his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ! We pray that thou wilt send abroad those who shall make known the unsearchable riches of Christ. May those who in distant lands dwell in the darkness of heathenism be strengthened in all patience, and be fruitful in abundant works, and rejoice, inasmuch as they know that their labor is not in vain in the Lord.

And so we pray that thou wilt press forward the promised day, and fulfill all those great and glorious predictions which so long have hovered in the twilight of prophecy. Grant that they may begin to fulfill themselves, and that all nations may be redeemed to the knowledge of God, to purity, to patience, to gentleness, to love, to

the whole circle of Christian graces. And may thy name on earth be everywhere honored, thy kingdom everywhere come, and the whole earth be filled with thy glory.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*



PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, grant, we beseech of thee, that we may live in the full hope of the gospel, and in the full fruition of faith. May we not measure ourselves by the narrow and sensuous rules of time. May we rise to more of the divine conception, and judge of ourselves as God judges of us. May we so be able to put ourselves into thine hands, and our souls into thy care, that we shall be content in the allotments of thy providence, to go or to stay; to rise or to fall; to do whatever is best. Upon those who have feeble faith; upon those of downcast minds; upon those who are weary and are waiting and wishing for their departure; and upon those who are anxious to remain—upon all these may the divine influence rest down. May they have light while they are in darkness. May they everywhere be released from the coarseness of this world, and be able to lift themselves up into the serene and transparent faith of the life that is to come. And at last, bring us, gathered from everywhere, into the companionship of the blessed in heaven; and we will give the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

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